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ABSTRACT

Women account for 63 percent of the teaching force but only 8 percent of the total general administrative positions in downstate Illinois schools. Since 1950, women's presence in administrative positions has declined, especially in regard to the elementary principalship. Women administrators tend to be older, with more experience, and earn lower salaries than their male counterparts. When candidates for administrative positions are restricted to one sex, there is no way of knowing that the best person for the job will be selected. As part of responsible citizen behavior, school board members must take positive steps to ensure that Illinois schools are staffed by the most competent, qualified, and talented people. Selecting the administrators of Illinois schools is too important to be left to irrelevant factors like gender. (Author/MLF)

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MS. ADMINISTRATOR AND THE SCHOOL BOARDS or Should School Boards Hire Lady Bosses?

Sally Bulkley Pancrazio*

Wasting resources is inexcusable in today's economic market. The full, effective, and efficient utilization of available fiscal and physical resources is a topic expressed, in one form or another, at every school board meeting in Illinois. The utilization of human resources is equally important since administrative decisions will naturally influence fiscal and physical resources.

Such utilization of human resources at the administrative level has been primarily restricted to males. There is no rational reason why an educational system, which holds as a goal the full development of human potential, should deprive itself of talented administrative leadership merely on the basis of gender.

It is the purpose of this paper to describe the status of women in Illinois educational leadership positions, present selected research findings relative to the effectiveness of women as administrators, and to suggest a role for school board members which will enhance opportunity for more effective leadership. The problems in Illinois education are too important to allow nonjob-related factors to be an influence in selecting administrators. The children of Illinois are too important not to demonstrate to them and their parents that they are getting the best possible leadership in Illinois schools.

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*Dr. Pancrazio is currently the manager for Research and Statistics, Illinois Office of Education. Aspects of this article were used as a basis for a speech, "Search and Seize: Women in Educational Leadership Positions," to the Lambda Chapter, Delta Kappa Gamma Society, Springfield, Illinois.

Status of Women in Illinois Educational Administration

Clearly, women have predominated in the teaching field since the Civil War. For the past 27 years alone in Illinois, women have also predominated in teaching. Table 1 shows the number of teachers since

TABLE 1
FULL TIME REGULAR TEACHERS IN ILLINOIS
BY SEX

	1950-51 n	1950-51 %	1976-77 n	1976-77 %
Elementary:				
Females	20,290	(84%)	37,956	(75%)
Males	3,851	(16%)	12,396	(25%)
Secondary:				
Females	5,351	(48%)	10,558	(39%)
Males	5,798	(52%)	16,301	(61%)
Total:				
Females	25,641	(73%)	48,514	(63%)
Males	9,649	(27%)	28,697	(37%)

Source: Teacher Service Records, Research and Statistics Section, Illinois Office of Education.
Data Exclude City of Chicago.

1950. The data indicate that women teachers currently account for 75% of the elementary teachers, and 63% of the total number of teachers. It is interesting to note that there has been a 9% increase in male teachers employed in elementary and secondary schools in the last 27 years. The above figures show the percent of males and females in the Illinois teaching force for downstate public schools. They can be used as a basis for comparing the percents of administrators by sex in those same schools. If sex was not a factor in hiring administrators, then the

percents of male and female administrators would be about the same as their presence in the available teaching force.

Table 2 lists the number and percent of males and females in the twelve general administrative positions. These positions are those with broad school-wide or district-wide responsibilities.

TABLE 2
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CERTIFICATED FULL-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, BY POSITION AND SEX, EXCLUDING THE CITY OF CHICAGO, 1968-69 and 1976-77

Position	1968 - 1969 Male n	1968 - 1969 Male %	1968 - 1969 Female n	1968 - 1969 Female %	1976 - 1977 Male n	1976 - 1977 Male %	1976 - 1977 Female n	1976 - 1977 Female %
Head Administrators								
Regional Superintendents	99	(92)	9	(8)	76	(97)	2	(3)
District Superintendents	1096	(95)	58	(5)	945	(98)	18	(2)
Senior High Principals	425	(98)	7	(2)	576	(99)	5	(1)
Junior High Principals	340	(94)	22	(6)	441	(97)	13	(3)
Elementary Principals	1506	(79)	411	(21)	1787	(86)	279	(14)
Central Staff and Assistant Administrators								
Asst. Reg. Supts.	80	(64)	45	(36)	86	(91)	9	(9)
Adm. Assts.	257	(87)	40	(13)	246	(88)	35	(12)
Asst. Supts.	267	(94)	18	(6)	327	(96)	15	(4)
Asst. Senior High Prin.	249	(95)	13	(5)	379	(95)	22	(5)
Asst. Junior High Prin.	130	(87)	19	(13)	204	(92)	18	(8)
Asst. Elem. Prin.	68	(68)	32	(32)	73	(72)	28	(27)
Business Managers**	101	(95)	5	(5)	128	(93)	9	(7)
TOTAL	4618	(87)	679	(13)	5268	(92)	453	(8)

Source: Illinois Office of Education, Teacher Service Records, Research and Statistics Section, Department of Research and Planning.

**This number may be deflated since certification of Business Managers became operative 1975-76, and only those certificated are counted on the TSR.

(excluding curriculum specialists, and directors of Title I, special education, vocational education, and adult education, etc.) Furthermore, the twelve positions are categorized as either head administrators (those having primary or major responsibilities) and assistant administrators or central staff. This latter group can be considered the current "talent" or resource pool for promotion head to administrators; they are the educators obtaining direct administrative experience.

Two points in time (1968-69 and 1976-77) were selected for comparison purposes since (1) this time period represents the period of greatest sensitivity to women's issues, and (2) the data are considered highly accurate.

Overall, men hold 92% of the current administrative positions even though males account for 37% of the teaching force. For head administrator positions in Illinois public downstate schools, there has been a <u>decrease</u> in the number and percent of females in the last 8 years. Except for the number of district superintendents (whose number has been affected by school district reorganizations, consolidations, and unifications), there has been an <u>increase</u> in the actual number and percent of males holding head administrative positions during this same time period. In other words, there was an <u>increase</u> in the actual number of jobs available to administrators over the last 8 years, but the jobs went to males.

The elementary principalship is a particular case in point. In 1968, there were 1,917 elementary principalships in downstate schools, 79% of which were headed by males. This year, however, there are 2,066 elementary principalships in downstate schools, 86% of which are headed by males. In comparing the teaching force in elementary schools with the principalships, women comprise 75% of the teaching force but only 14% of the principalships.

It is also interesting to note that 17 of the 18 district superintendents who happen to be women are from elementary districts; eleven of

those districts have enrollments under 300, and 13 are in the northern part of the State. It appears that female superintendents are associated with younger children, but even here their numbers are decreasing annually.

An examination of the assistant administrators indicates that the talent or resource pool of women is also disproportionate to their presence in the downstate Illinois teaching force. The prediction is that the existing status of women in administrative positions will remain somewhat the same or decline unless significant recruitment changes are made.

If this status exists for the time period when there has been greatest awareness and sensitivity given to non-discriminatory practices, what was the status of women administrators in 1950? Table 3 presents statistics on the four major administrative positions:

TABLE 3
SELECTED CATEGORIES OF ILLINOIS EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, BY SEX, 1950 and 1976

	1950		1976	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
District Superintendent	594 (98%)	11 (2%)	945 (98%)	18 (2%)
Elementary Principal	1,034 (58%)	742 (42%)	1,787 (86%)	279 (14%)
Junior High Principal	not available		441 (97%)	13 (3%)
Senior High Principal	450 (92%)	37 (8%)	576 (99%)	5 (1%)

Source: Illinois Office of Education, Annual Statistical Report and Teacher Service Records, Excluding City of Chicago, Research and Statistics Section.

The data in Table 3 indicate that, percentage wise, females were better represented as elementary and senior high principals in 1950 than today! The most significant decline was in the elementary principalship.

Table 4 indicates the current average age and years of experience and salary for male and female administrators for the four major administrative positions. The data are clear. The female administrators are older, more experienced, and yet earn lower salaries than their male counterparts in downstate Illinois public schools.

TABLE 4
AVERAGE AGE, YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, AND SALARY OF SELECTED ILLINOIS ADMINISTRATORS, 1976-77, BY SEX

	Male	Female
District Superintendents:		
Age	47.6	55.7
Years Experience	22.3	27.5
Salary	$26,884	$20,648
Elementary Principal:		
Age	44.1	50.3
Years Experience	18.6	22.4
Salary	$21,138	$20,821
Junior High Principal:		
Age	43.6	46.6
Years Experience	18.4	19.4
Salary	$22,823	$21,913
Senior High Principal:		
Age	42.9	47.0
Years Experience	17.6	19.4
Salary	$23,005	$21,896

Source: Teacher Service Record, 1976-77, Excludes City of Chicago, Illinois Office of Education, Research and Statistics Section.

Part of the salary discrepancy is explained by examining the degree status for these same positions (see Table 5). A comparison of the proportion of males or females holding various degrees indicates that, except for the junior high principalship, a greater percent of male administrators hold advanced degrees (masters, advanced, or doctorate) than their female counterparts. (A greater percent of female junior high principals (23%) hold a doctorate than males (5%), but the number of females is only three.)

In sum, women account for 63% of the teaching force but only 8% of the total general administrative positions, in downstate Illinois schools.* Since 1950, women's presence in administrative positions has declined, especially in regard to the elementary principalship. This decline has occurred in almost all positions (except the district superintendency) even though there has been an increase in the number of those positions. The talent pool of assistant administrators reflects the sex composition of the head administrators as it is predominately male. Women administrators tend to be older, with more experience, and earn, on the average, lower salaries than their male counterparts. Male administrators tend to hold a greater percent of advanced degrees which tends to increase salaries.

The Effectiveness of Women as Bosses

A review of the literature in education and management indicates that attention is being given to women as executives, managers, and

*Women in Illinois administrative positions tend to be somewhat better represented than women in management positions in general. According to Nicholson, ("Management Training for Women: A Status Report," Training: Magazine for Human Resources Development, September, 1976), women comprise 15 percent of entry level management positions, 5 percent of middle management, and only 1 percent of top management positions. One feature of the Illinois public school system which actually tends to favor women is the large number of school districts and schools.

TABLE 5
DEGREE STATUS FOR SELECTED ADMINISTRATOR POSITIONS, BY SEX, 1976-77

Position	Male		Female	
District Superintendent:				
No Degree	0	(0%)	2	(11%)
BA/BS	6	(0%)	2	(11%)
MA/MS	566	(60%)	9	(50%)
Advanced	156	(17%)	1	(5%)
Doctorate	217	(23%)	4	(22%)
Total	945		18	
Elementary Principal:				
No Degree	64	(3%)	8	(2%)
BA/BS	52	(2%)	25	(9%)
MA/MS	1,613	(90%)	233	(84%)
Advanced	64	(3%)	8	(2%)
Doctorate	57	(2%)	8	(2%)
Total	1,787		279	
Junior High Principal:				
No Degree	0	-	0	-
BA/BS	3	(1%)	0	-
MA/MS	392	(89%)	10	(77%)
Advanced	23	(5%)	0	-
Doctorate	23	(5%)	3	(23%)
Total	441		13	
Secondary High Principal:				
No Degree	-		-	
BA/BS	2	(0%)	0	-
MA/MS	489	(85%)	5	(100%)
Advanced	36	(6%)	0	-
Doctorate	49	(9%)	0	-
Total	576		5	

Source: Teacher Service Record, Illinois Office of Education, Research and Statistics Section, 1976-77, Excluding Chicago.

administrators. Leadership positions are generally associated with males, however.

The research literature does indicate that males and females are different in their leadership-management styles. Some of these differences are as follows:

(1) The "Old Boy Network." Men have had the benefit of the "old boy network" for centuries and they have learned to use it to their advantage. The "Old Boy Network" is a subtle, active system of support which is dependent on friendship, persuasion, favors, promises and connections with people who already have influence.[1] This network is most obvious in settings where people are hired or promoted primarily on the basis of recommendations from friends, previous associates, classmates, or colleagues. The "old boy network" provides access to jobs. The network serves to communicate information about individuals. Examples of such a system are shown in the following two examples:

(1) Superintendent XYZ is initially interviewed on the basis of recommendations made by certain university professors of educational administration. Those professors either recommended their own star pupils (students with whom the professor felt comfortable, probably socialized with, and worked with to the professor's advantage as well) or recommended fellow classmates from their graduate school.

(2) Superintendent XYZ is hired and he immediately hires or promotes those administrators with whom he was in school, or the students of his former colleagues (possible the one who recommended him for the superintendency!), or he hires his staff associated with the former position.

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[1]Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim, "Women Executives in the Old-Boy Network," Psychology Today, January 1977, 76-81.

Factors of loyalty, previous associations, and the exchange of favors characterize these relationships. Not all successful males are members of the network, of course.

The major problem with these types of associations is that cooperation, personal support, and loyalty-at-all-costs are traded at the expense of competence, and healthy and open competition. Also, different situations call for different types of leadership. The network is based on similarity, not differentness.

Most women who aspire to leadership have demonstrated such leadership among women's groups. The "old boy system" works to their disadvantage immediately when they try to compete with males for leadership positions. Women simply don't have the "right" contacts. Most influential men won't think to recommend women. Those women who are eligible for employment consideration are not a part of the "network." Such a system screens or filters out the possibility that competent women will be considered.

In any case, opportunities for locating the best qualified person to head the schools are limited to a social framework. Illinois schools deserve the best administrators they can get. School board members searching for superintendents should be aware of the tendency of the sponsors to advance their own power base and ask for both male and female candidates.

(2) Playing the Game. A selective review[2, 3, 4] of the research about female and male executives shows that the "playing of the management--how they deal with people--game" is different for males and females. Somewhat related to maintaining the "old boy network," males tend to rely on teamwork and compromise. Sometimes such teamwork involves the

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[2]Hennig and Jardim, Op. Cit., pp.76-81.

[3]Delaine R. Nicholson, "Management Training for Women: A status Report," Training: Magazine of Human Resources Development, September 1976.

[4](Editorial. "Women May Be More Than Equal," Training: A Magazine of Human Resources Development, September 1976, p. 7).

tendency for "coverup," trading favors, and making excuses for others as well as the necessary give and take required in group decision making. In such instances, an atmosphere for divergent and independent thinking may not be enhanced. On the other hand, women in executive positions were found to be more independent, honest, less emotionally involved, and objective. With the lack of a support network and the reinforcements attached to individual performance and success in women, this finding seems consistent.

Although teamwork and compromise is often necessary, decisions about budgeting, collective bargaining, and reductions in staff require independence, honesty, ability to cope with pressures, and objectivity. Women aspiring to educational leadership are different from their male and female peers. They have already demonstrated their courage and decisiveness in obtaining credentials in a nontraditional, nonsupportive area. They deserve to be given the opportunity to provide leadership to Illinois schools.

(3) Attitudes about the Principalship. The principalship in Illinois schools offers a significant opportunity to demonstrate leadership. Sheer numbers in such a diversified State as Illinois--with its complex student body and large number of teachers--make the principalship a unique opportunity for school leadership. As indicated earlier, the number of administrator jobs in Illinois schools has increased while the number and percent of women in principalships, especially elementary, have significantly decreased.

Results of a comparative study on male and female principals indicated that female principals showed more evidence of being aware of the cognitive dimension in pupil learning and that women outscored men in ability to work with teachers and the community, showed more concern

with objectives, and possessed greater knowledge of teaching methods and techniques.[6] With all their skills--and the "kicker" is this--school boards still preferred men principals! Another interesting finding in this same study was that female teachers approved of female principals more than male principals, but those males who disapproved of female principals were men who had only taught under male principals. This suggests, of course, that contact and experience are important factors in changing attitudes. Such experience tends to allow more flexibility in attitudes...from other teachers as well as school board members.

The Role of School Board Members

By law, school boards are entrusted by the State and community to govern the schools. Such governance assumes the most responsible behavior in the utilization of fiscal, physical, and human resources. School board members have an obligation to see that their schools are administered by the most qualified leaders. Leadership in Illinois schools is currently influenced by the sex of the administrator. Where candidates for administrative positions are restricted to one sex, there is no way of knowing that the best person for the job will be selected. School board members can take the following actions to enhance the opportunity for the most effective and efficient use of human talent in the leadership of Illinois schools.

(1) When recommendations for superintendents are made by consultants, school board members should specifically request the names of both men and women. Women consultants can also be requested to provide names.

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[6]Kathryn Cirincione-Coles, "The Administrator: Male or Female? Journal of Teacher Education, Volume XXVI, Number 4, Winter 1975, pp. 326-328.

The point is not to hire a woman for the job. The point is to screen from a wide range of candidates and hire the best person, male or female. Such a wide screening would enhance the possibility that the best person is hired.

(2) When interviewing candidates for a superintendency, individual qualities should be assessed. Has this person already demonstrated leadership, personally and professionally? Can this person cope with pressure? Can this person maintain independence and be sometimes unpopular? Remember that initial objection to a superintendent who is "different" is likely to be overcome quickly once people gain experience and knowledge of the person as an individual.

(3) When assignments for principalships and other assistant administrators are made, monitor the process so that the selection process includes both males and females. It is a fact that some males won't get selected when females are allowed to compete, but sex should be an irrelevant factor in the selection of leaders. By definition, a competent and qualified female will be a better administrator than a mediocre male.

(4) Be sensitive to diluting any "old boy network" that might be developing in your district. A superintendent who assigns only his (or her) associates to key leadership and influential positions may have something to hide from the board...if nothing else than his/her own insecurity and lack of confidence about the job. The problems of the times call for new ideas, new approaches. The "old boy system" discourages differentness.

(5) When communicating with professors of educational administration, insist that your district will not be denying opportunities

for administration because of the sex of the applicants. Some professors of educational administration have stated that they don't encourage women in their programs because "there are no jobs for them." (Such women are likely to be subtly encouraged to go into curriculum supervision.) The "no jobs arguments" is quite fallacious, given the number of Illinois schools. But, the professors can essentially pass the buck for equal opportunity onto the school boards. If school boards insist on highly qualified persons, the departments of educational administration will comply, both in training and in recommending applicants.

(6) Become familiar with the Illinois laws regarding sex discrimination. Of course, board members can get around these laws by certain maneuvers--such as placing women's names on recruitment lists but never interviewing them. Such manuevers, however, divert energy away from the real issue--selecting the best person qualified for a job. In any case, school board members will want to demonstrate their respect for laws, not subvert them.

(7) School board members should examine their preferences for male administrators. Predicting administrative behavior on the basis of sex will not be reliable. Leaders have many things in common, and these leadership dimensions are not related to sex.

In sum, Illinois schools are not now capitalizing on a significant source of human resources--women. As part of responsible citizen behavior, school board members must take positive steps to ensure that Illinois schools are staffed by the most competent, qualified, and talented people. Selecting the administrators of Illinois schools is too important to be left to irrelevant factors like gender.